PROMENADE

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLK LORE

VOL. II No. 10

AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP

MARGOT MAYO, LEADER

Season's greetings

"PROMENADE"

Official Organ of the American Square Dance Group

"The purposes of the American Square Dance Group shall be to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama and general Americana which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with all who sincerely entertain similar views."

- from the Constitution of the ASDG

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Christmas, down-home, was always a season of suspense, activity, and tremendous joy. We had no fir trees, so the children of the family went out and returned triumphantly with a cottonwood tree, and proceeded to wrap its bare twigs with tinfoil and bedeck its sad arms with present and decorations which, somehow, made it look like a "real Christmas tree". After the formal gathering of the clan around the tree on Christmas Eve, and a short spell of story-telling by my father (it was one of the few times we could really count on having him with us, for even his work as the President and founder of a southern college would be put away for this special occasion), we all went out-doors, where we lit "sparklers" and, in the dark, cold Texas night, wrote out a message of cheer in bright colors and lights. The "sparklers" are those fireworks which northern kids use at Fourth-of-July celebrations.

Then the family and friends gathered around the piano (or the stove) in the music-room and sang carols--German carols, American and French carols, beloved of many generations. My favorite was "Silent Night", for I fondly took the words to my heart and gave them my own interpretation. "Round yon Virgin Mother and child" became, to me "Around yard, Virgie, (the colored girl who had been a part of our family for eighteen years) mother (my mother, of course) and child (me, of course)--all of which meant the family sitting there together in the backyard. I mention this, merely to show how children, and sometime adults as well, can misinterpret words!

Those days of joy, of implicit faith, of security and seeming permenace, are gone, and now we are facing, again, a period, short or long we cannot guess, of determined and sure struggle. Those of us who have faith in this strange intangible thing called "America" will remember folk songs and dances of many nations, the French, the German and Italian, the Russian and Anglo-Saxon, and all other contributions to world culture. We won't forget <u>any</u> of the races and creeds that have built America, and we can only pray that soon the world will once more gain an equlibrium and that life will settle back into security

Last year, the festivities of the Christmas season were darkened for the members of the AS-DG by the personal and very tragic loss of one of our members. Again, our former carefree approach to the seasons gaieties is sombered this time by the events which have befallen our country.

But because we are members of the "The American Square-Dance Group" we feel that we have a very special job to do. Not only can we help with our songs and dances and the spontaneous joy they always bring, but we must help to keep alive those contributions of the many nations which are America. It is our job, as members of the Group, to remember that "All men are created equal" and if the time ever comes when we, as Group members, forget that all the peoples of the world are a part of our country, that their folk heritages are ours, that this is "the land of the free and the home of the brave", then we have no longer the right to claim membership in an American folk group.

Margot

NOTICE

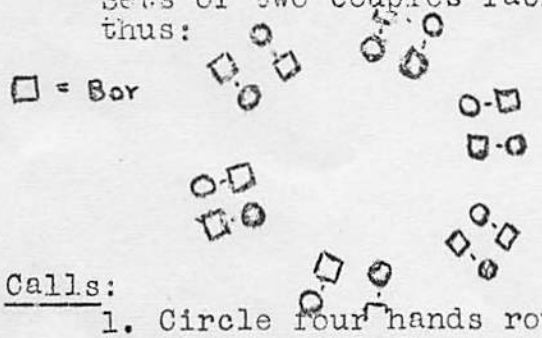
With this issue we close the covers on the second volume of Promenade. In these two years we have watched our magazine climb to nation-wide circulation and popular esteem. We are proud to be the means of bringing a little of the vast stores of American folk-lore within the reach of those who desire it. And we plan bigger and better things for you in the issues to come.

But we do not live within a little world of our own, and the events of the last year have reached, as is natural, into the folk field. Costs of all kinds have risen, and priorities have cut into paper supplies. We are faced with the necessity of having to cut down on the size of Promenade. This does not mean that there will be any diminution of the material presented. But we won't have huge feature articles in every issue; there won't be both a book review and a record review in every issue. But we will deliver the goods.

SICILIAN CIRCLE

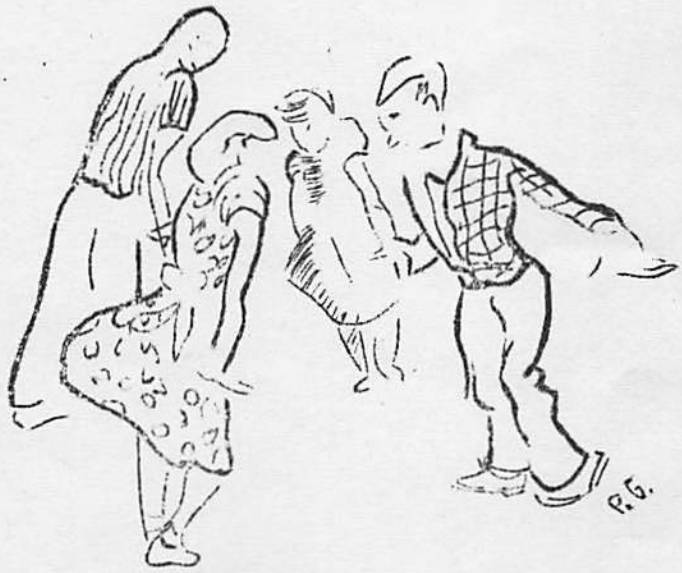
Music:
Portland Fancy (Vol II, No 8) or any lively 6/8 tune

Formation:
Sets of two couples facing, forming a circle around the room, thus:



Calls:
1. Circle four hands round
2. Right and left
3. Ladies chain
4. Forward and back
5. Half-promenade o'er

Description:
1. All four join hands and circle once around to place.
2. The couples pass through each other, each lady passing between the opposite dancers, each gent passing on the outside. They turn around, the gent backing up and the lady moving around forward, and repeat to place.
3. Each lady advances, gives right hand to the opposite lady, passes by, gives left hand to opposite gent, who places his right hand on her waist and wheels her around. Repeat to place.
4. Each gent takes his partner's hand and they take four steps toward the opposite couple and four back.
5. Each couple take regular promenade position and walks by the opposite couple, gents on the inside, passing left shoulder to left. They do not turn around, but remain facing the approaching couple, with whom they repeat the dance. The dance may be performed as long as desired.



POP GOES THE WEASEL

Music:
Pop goes the Weasel

Formation:
Square Set

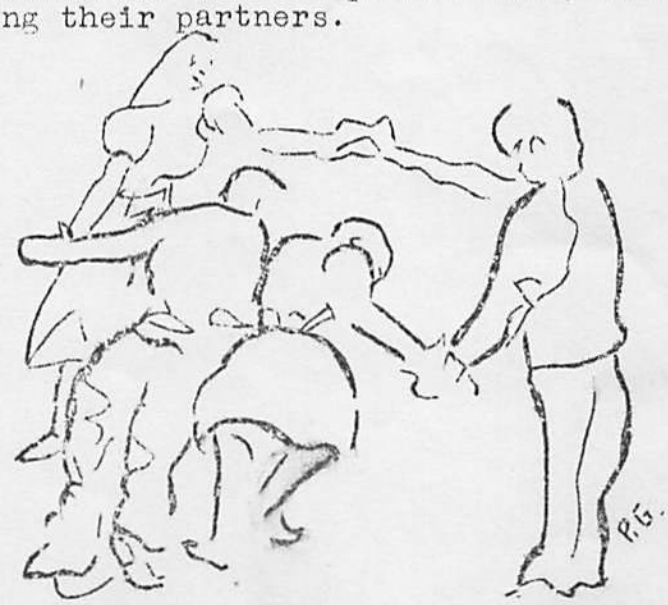
Calls:

1. Honor partners, corners
2. Circle left
3. First lady out to the right and circle three.
4. Pop that lady and on to the next; circle three.
5. Pop them through and on to the next; circle three.
6. Pop them through and circle four.
7. Pop them through and everybody swing.
8. Promenade.

Description:

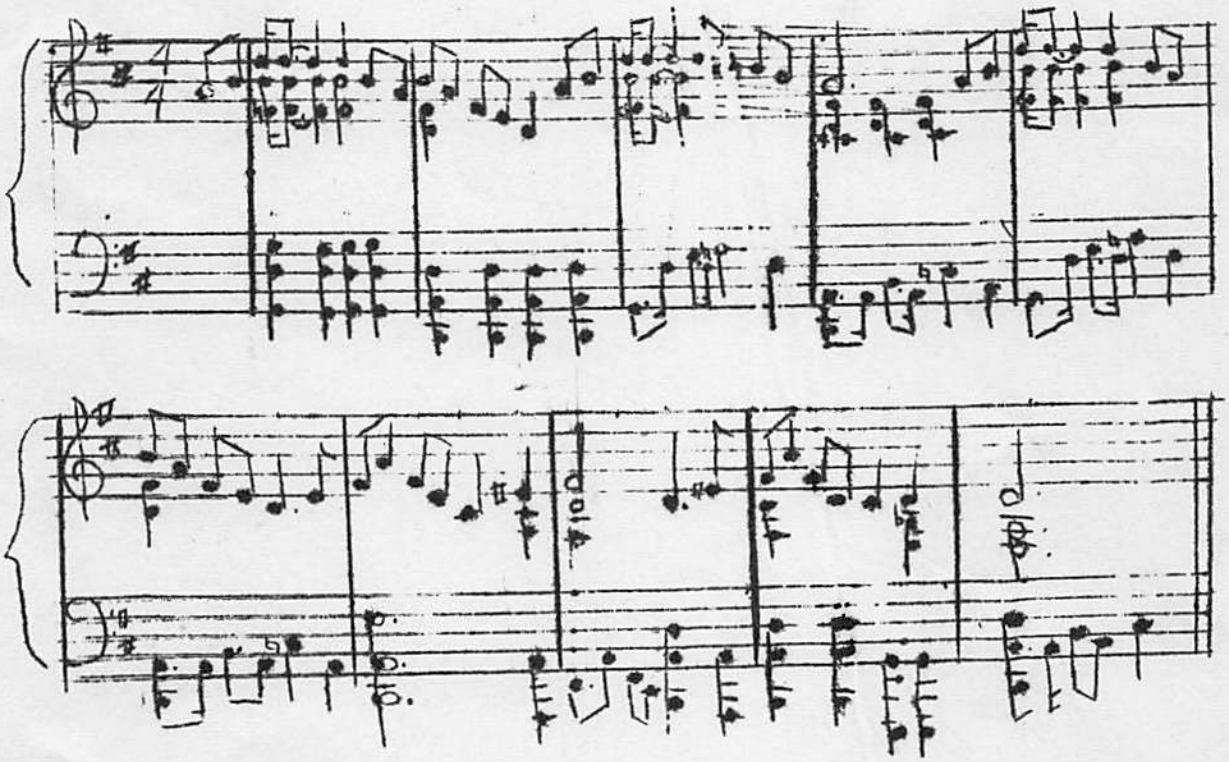
1. All bow to partners, then left hand ladies.
2. All join hands, circle once around to the left.
3. First lady goes out to the right and circles with the second couple.
4. The second lady and gent raise their arms and "pop" the first lady under; she goes on to the next and circles three. At the same time the first gent goes out to the second couple and circles three.
5. The first lady and the first gent are both "popped", each going on to the next and circling three.
6. The first lady and gent are "popped" through again, and then they circle four hands round with the fourth couple.
7. The first couple is popped through, and everyone swings his partner.
8. Gents take ladies in promenade' position and walk once around the set, counter-clockwise, and stop in their places.

Repeat as above for each couple in turn, ending with all honoring their partners.



JOHN HENRY

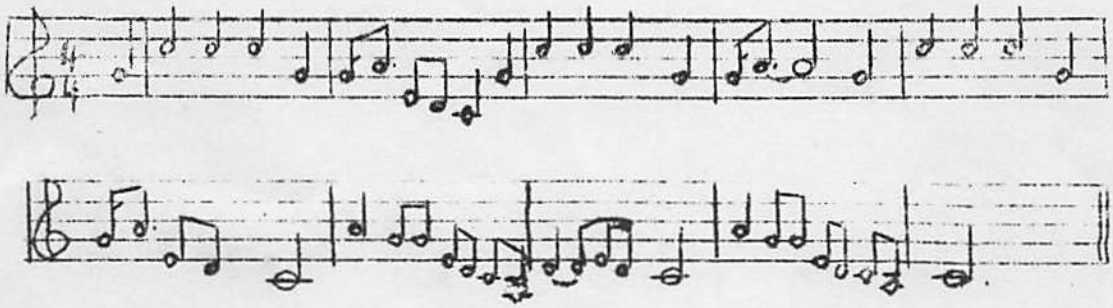
Arr. for dancing



This simple piano arrangement was composed, not to be adhered to rigidly, but merely to serve as a foundation for the numerous variations you will probably make up yourself. It will serve admirably for any of the dances which call for a 4/4 time and escpecially for the Running Set.

STEEL - DRIVING JOHN HENRY

As sung by Rufus Crisp (Ky.),
and Sheridan Walker (Tenn.)



They take John Henry to the Bluefield mine
Put him in the tunnel to drive
He drove so hard he jumped through the rock
Then he throwed down his hammer and cried (Lord,Lord)
Then he throwed down his hammer and cried.

John Henry told his shaker one day
"Shaker, you'd better pray
Cause if I miss this piece of steel
Tomorrow'll be your burial day,"(repeat)

John Henry hammered in the mountain
Twill his hammer caught on fire
The last words I heard John Henry say
"A cool drink of water 'fore I die" (repeat)

John Henry had a little woman
And her name hit was Polly Ann
When John Henry was sick and a-laying in his bed
Polly drove steel like a man, (repeat)

John Henry had two little gals
They was dressed all in red
Only words I heard them say
"I'm goin' where my pappy fell dead, (repeat)

John Henry had a little woman
The dress she wore was blue
Well, she went across the track and never looked back
Says,"John Henry, I been true to you", (repeat)

They took John Henry to the Bluefield mine
And buried him in the sand
Two men from the East and a lady from the West
Come to see that poor steel drivin' man, (repeat)

Well, they carried John Henry down to the graveyard
They looked at him good and long
The last words I heard them say was
"John Henry he is dead and gone", (repeat)

SINCE MARGOT HAD "such fun playing Bibliography" when she was compiling the Decca Records Bibliography, we thought you might like to compile your own bibliography of folk books and add these to your library. Each month we will offer a few titles of books and records with short notes about each.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF AMERICA, Ira W. Ford, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1940.

Here are words and music to many folk songs, calls, descriptions, and fiddle tunes for many square dances. Other interesting chapters deal with related subjects. Particularly interesting for the fiddle tunes and the directions for the old-fashioned way of tuning fiddles, this book is a treasure for those interested in American folk lore.

SING A SONG OF AMERICANS, Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet, music by Arnold Shaw, Musette Publishers, Inc., New York, 1941.

This book abounds in songs about Americans, such as, "Peregrine White and Virginia Dare", "John Quincy Adams", "Oliver De Lancey", "Captain Kidd", "Theodore Roosevelt", "Abraham Lincoln", and lots more! The words are charming, and children will feel quite at home with the everyday rythms, which are fully arranged for piano. We highly reccommend it for use in schools, children's groups, etc. Illustrations are in color by M. Shuger.

FOLK SONGS OF ROANOKE AND THE ALLEMANDE, Louis W. Chappell, the Ballad Press, Morgantown, W. Va., 1939.

This book contains British Ballad Survivals, Sea Ballads and Songs, religious and other types of American songs. There is no piano accompaniment, the book containing only the words and melodies.

NOTES OF INTEREST

With the passing of the holiday season, the ASDG is resuming its policy of holding Open House on the second and fourth Saturday nights in every month. The admission will still be the same fifty-five cents, and we still guarantee a swell time to all. And incidentally, our studio has been newly air-conditioned, so we can all now dance as fast and as hard as we like without any annoyance from the humidity.

When the time came round for publishing the last issue of Promenade, it was found that circumstances had conspired to deprive us of the services of Margot and those members of the Senior Group who usually undertake this task. And so our Juniors took over and practically turned out the whole job by themselves. They planned the issue, wrote the articles and dances, cut the stencils, ran the mimeo, and did all the numerous other things which are necessary to putting Promenade in your ahnds. We think they did a swell job; don't you?

Although rumors have been reaching us from friends in various sections of the country to the effect that our four albums of dance tunes were being sold, we had up until now no word of their release in the city. But the other day we found out that they should be available to New Yorkers by the middle of January. There are four albums, recorded by the ASDG under Margot's supervision with Manny calling, cover the fields of the Running Set, the Longways Set, the Quadrille, and the Play-Party game.

A good number of our members have been leaving New York recently, some to schools, some to Defense jobs, and some into the Army. But while they may be removed, their hearts are still with us. An example is Phyllis Gold of the Junior Group who is away from the Group getting an education, but who, nevertheless, found time to send in a batch of wonderful sketches which will enliven the pages of Promenade for months to come. Thanks a lot, Phyllis; we're always glad to hear from our absent members.

The ASDG celebrated a combination Christmas and New Year's party at the Group studio on December 29. Juniors and Seniors swung through all the old favorites and then relaxed to listen to and sing with our invited guests. Leadbelly and Josh White were magnificently generous with their renditions of the songs which theyh have made so popular through recordings and performances. Elie Siegmeister dropped in for a square dance or two, many other friends of the Group were present, and the Almanac singers favored us with some of their modern folksongs. We all had a swell time time and we're looking forward eagerly to the next one.